

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

threatened its dissolution and had brought great financial distress to a certain section, with a corresponding depression in all. His party had been compelled virtually to acknowledge its failure by abandoning it. True, he had tasted of supreme power, but he had also felt, as never before, its accompanying penalties. His appointments to office had won him enemies as well as friends. Always keenly sensitive to slander and even to criticism, he had for two years been sorely wounded. Without these reasons, indeed, he would willingly have retired. Rotation in office had always been one of the cardinal points in his political creed; and he had never ceased to commend Washington's example. He had early in his first term announced his intention of following it. Now that personal feelings were thus thrown into the scale, he looked toward retirement with more than willingness. For many months before, his letters are full of longing for the day of relief. This culminates in a letter written from Washington to M. Dupont de Nemours two days before Madison was installed. "Within a few days I retire to my family, my books and farms; and having gained the harbor myself, I shall look on my friends still buffeting the storm, with anxiety indeed, but not with envy. Never did a prisoner, released from his chains, feel such relief as I shall on shaking off the shackles of power. Nature intended me for the tranquil pursuits of science, by rendering them my supreme delight. But the enormities of the times in which I have lived have forced me to take a part in resisting them, and to commit myself on the boisterous ocean of political passions. I thank God for the opportunity of retiring from them without censure, and carrying with me the most consoling proofs of public approbation."

Jefferson reached Monticello on March 15th. The usual discomforts of the journey inseparable from the season were increased by a snow storm through which he traveled eight hours, most of the time on horseback. He experienced no disastrous results, and wrote the President that from this he "had more confidence in his *vis vitae* than he had before entertained." His neighbors of Albemarle County had wished to